

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 14-21 are pending in the Application, and claims 9-13 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-2, 7, 14, 16, and 21 currently stand rejected. Claims 3-6, 8, 15, and 17-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 3, 6, 8, 15, 17, and 18 are amended, and claims 1-2, 7, 14, 16, and 21 are canceled herein. Reconsideration of the Application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Cancellation Of Rejected Claims

In the Office Action of April 13, 2004, the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-2, 7, 14, 16, and 21 remain rejected. Because of the Applicants' wish to expedite the allowance and issuance of the present Application, Applicants therefore refrain from further discussing the cited references, and instead, herein cancel currently rejected claims 1-2, 7, 14, 16, and 21 without prejudice, and amend the remaining rejected claims to thereby place the Application in condition for immediate allowance.

The Applicants expressly state that the rejected claims are not cancelled herein for reasons of patentability. The rejected claims are cancelled solely to expedite the allowance and issuance of the Application. Furthermore, the Applicants also reserve the right to seek allowance of any additional claims in Applications that may claim priority in the present Application.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 7, the Examiner indicates that claims 3-6, 8, 15, and 17-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants therefore herein amend claims 3, 6, 8, 15, 17, and 18 in independent form to include the limitations of the corresponding base claim and any intervening claims, to thereby place claims 3, 6, 8, 15, 17, and 18 in condition for immediate allowance. The remaining non-cancelled dependent claims depend from respective corresponding ones of the foregoing independent claims 3, 6, 8, 15, 17, and 18, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons.

Summary

Applicants submit that the foregoing amendments and remarks overcome the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Because the cited references, or the Examiner's citations thereto, do not teach or suggest the claimed invention, and in light of the differences between the claimed invention and the cited prior art, Applicants therefore submit that the claimed invention is patentable over the cited art, and respectfully request the Examiner to allow claims 3-6, 8, 15, and 17-20, so that the present Application may issue in a timely manner. If there are any questions concerning this amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

Gregory J. Koerner, Reg. No. 38,519
SIMON & KOERNER LLP
10052 Pasadena Avenue, Suite B
Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 873-3943